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CIA Expansion Seen 'Stupid'

Editor:

I read with interest the compendium of nationwide editorial opinion regarding the proposed enlargement of "watch dog" surveillance and, presumably, thus, responsibility for the operations of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). This seems to me as neat—and overwhelmingly stupid—a formula for ignoring the facts of our present day world as could be imagined by patriotic Americans. Note that I say "patriotic." It could easily be imagined by persons consciously aiming at hamstringing the effectiveness of this necessary arm of our national security. I do not mean that all those advocating the inclusion of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in an enlarged watch dog body are unpatriotic—not at all—but facts are facts and the brass hard facts of today are that we live in a continuous environment of international peril.

I have never been a "red baller." I regretted at the time the very existence of the (happily) late Senator McCarthy, and witnessed personally the reign of terror which he and his gum-shoed subordinates spread throughout our foreign service missions in Europe. Nevertheless, our country faces, and will continue to face, highly organized, implacable, and extremely skillful intelligence agents who carry on rather well their assignments, and who are not the targets of an insatiable hunger and demand from all parts of their governments, and populations at home, to know just what they are doing! Anyone who has had the slightest experience with intelligence matters, knows that one of the most dangerous sources of "leakage" is the person who wants to show off—perhaps to his wife, to his friends, at a cocktail party, and even perhaps to another Senator! This is one of the underlying principles guiding every single successful intelligence operation—"the need to know." No one knows more than he needs successfully to perform his duties. Does Senator Fulbright, et al., think he needs to know all that CIA is doing? Does the New York Times, whose running feud with CIA is a contemporary mystery, need also to know? Democracy or no democracy, does the entire people of the U.S.A. need to know? Would it have done good if thousands knew about the highly successful U-2 flights over the USSR before the unfortunate—and valiant—Powers was shot down?

There just are some phases and aspects of governmental action in a world like ours—and this has forever been true—which cannot, should not, and must not, be shared with many people. It is not a question of unpatriotic persons. It is simple mathematics: the more who know, the higher the probability of a leak. And leaks are something we cannot conceivably afford.

The world is just too dangerous!

We should all oppose this threatened enlargement of the already adequate surveillance of the Central Intelligence Agency!

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